TASK FORCE TO STUDY GROUP HOME
EDUCATION AND PLACEMENT PRACTICES
Report of Education Issues Workgroup - February 4, 2008
Summary of Educational Outcomes and Opportunities for Youth in Group Homes

Educational Outcomes for Youth in Out-of-Home Care

Compared with their peers in the community, youth in out-of-home placements:
- Experience significant academic failure
  - Youth aging out of foster care read, on average, at only the 7th grade level
  - Youth in juvenile facilities read, on average, at only the 5th grade level
- Have repeated one or more grades at substantially higher rates, and are over-age for their grade
- Have one or more educational disabilities and are eligible to receive special education services at three to five times higher rate
- Are suspended and expelled at greater rates
- Have higher rates of school mobility, which is associated with lack of instructional continuity and poor attachment to schooling
- These characteristics and experiences place youth at substantially increased risk of school drop out

Methods of Delivery of Education Services in Group Homes

- Survey of 17 states: Methodology and Findings
- Methods of delivering educational services to youth in state-operated/contracted group homes vary within and between states
- Three primary models:
  - On-site education services provided by teachers employed by group home
  - One-site education services provided by teachers employed by local public schools or State Department of Education
  - Students attend local public schools or community-based GED programs

Challenges and Recommendations

- Educational outcomes are a critical aspect of the broader well being of children in group homes, and academic strengths/needs should be considered in referral and placement
- Improve educational stability for youth in group homes (changing schools only when this would benefit youth, expedite enrollment and transfer of credits)
- Assist case managers in securing appropriate education programming focusing on continuity of services
- Strengthen collaboration and coordination between local public schools, group homes and placement agencies, and accountability for outcomes
- Training on educational rights for case workers and families
- Provide academic support including tutoring and homework assistance
- Conduct outcome study